Issue No. 35

In The News

New West Opens New Strongstart Bc Centre

Province Gives $895,000 to B.C. Raise-a-reader Campaign

B.C. Celebrates 150 Years, Students Tell Their Stories

Carney Hill Strongstart Bc Centre Open for Preschoolers

$1 Million for Playgrounds Helps Keep Children Active

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Links

- Media Room
- StrongStart BC
- LearnNow BC
- School Choices
- Healthy Schools
- ReadNow BC
- School District Visits

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

January signals the beginning of many new opportunities for the province, for schools, and for students.

This month, I'm proud to say that students in the Central Okanagan school district will be riding to school in Canada 's first hybrid school bus. We hope to see many more energy efficient buses taking our children to school in the future.

We're also working to improve the health of our students. Across the province, students in 13 early leader schools are getting daily physical activity to make their bodies stronger. By September 2008, daily physical activity will be mandatory for every student in the province.

As well, B.C. is the first province in Canada to ban, starting this month, the sale of junk food in our elementary schools. The ban includes foods sold in cafeterias, vending machines, and in-school fundraising sales. It will come into effect for all schools in B.C. by September 2008.

And just this week, we launched Reel Vue 2008, a student film project and festival with a BC150 theme. Our secondary students will have the opportunity to work with film experts to tell their own unique stories as they relate to our province's history. Information can be found at www.reelvueonline.com.

B.C. Driven to Go Green

The very first hybrid-powered school bus in Canada began service on January 15 in Kelowna, taking a number of very excited Rutland elementary school students for a ride. In hybrid vehicles, the diesel and electrical engines take turns powering the bus, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and lowering fuel costs. Read more.

Minister of Education Shirley Bond, Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Al Horning, and staff and students from Rutland elementary school take a ride in Canada's first hybrid school bus.

HOT TOPIC

This is Family Literacy Week in British Columbia. It's the ninth year in a

row that we are recognizing the important contributions families make to literacy, and the critical contribution of literacy to our province's well-being.

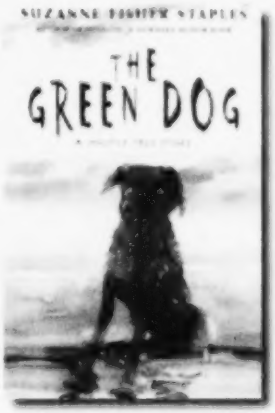
Literacy is a foundation of our society and it allows our province and nation to thrive economically and socially. Literacy offers individuals the opportunity to actively participate in their communities and to reach their full potential. But the fact is twenty-five per cent of children start school without the basic fundamentals they will need to succeed. Many of these children don't catch up and can experience reading and learning challenges for the rest of their lives.

This government is working hard to improve literacy for British Columbians. We've invested over $130 million dollars into literacy programs through our ReadNow BC literacy strategic plan, and through a number of other initiatives. In particular, StrongStart BC early learning centres are supporting literacy development in preschoolers before it becomes a challenge. The program places early learning centres in underutilized school space and works with families to give children the skills and confidence they will need to succeed in school and in life.

While schools can help, families play a critical role in their children's physical, cognitive, social, and literacy development. If you have a young child — no matter how young — start now: pick up a book and read aloud. Your child will love the time with you, and learn to love reading too!

Reading Corner

Suzanne has just completed Grade 4, and despite having three other siblings, spends much of her time alone. She dreams of having a dog to keep her company. When her wish is granted in the summer, Suzanne experiences both the joys and heartaches of pet ownership. This delightful but poignant story, by a Newberry-award-winning author, is appropriate for readers in grades 4–5.



The Green Dog – A Mostly True Story
Suzanne Fischer-Staples